

## RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN IRAN

Politically the new regime resembled a police state. Although a new parliament was elected in the beginning of 1946, allegedly according to the principle of universal and secret suffrage, yet little democratic freedom was in evidence. Hundreds of refugees complaining of terror escaped into Iran or Iraq. At the same time the Azerbaijani secret police was being modeled after N.K.V.D. patterns. It was headed by Salamollah Javid, Minister of Interior and a veteran Communist educated in Russia. Foreigners were generally barred from traveling in Azerbaijan, and those who happened to get there were frequently molested and warned by the local authorities not to show too much curiosity.<sup>2</sup> The government itself was composed of men who were strongly linked to the Soviets or directly imported from Russia.<sup>3</sup> The Azerbaijani "people's army" or the partisans, *fedailar* were infiltrated by hundreds of Soviet agents from the Caucasus and were largely composed of Armenians or those Iranian "immigrants," *mohajir* who in 1936 had returned to their native country from the Soviet Union. These revolutionary troops were, as a rule, clad in Soviet uniforms with Azerbaijani insignia.

"Premier" Pishevari, valiantly seconded by the Tudeh propaganda in Teheran, vacillated between frank statements of having received Soviet help and ardent denials that this help was anything more than "moral support." In a broadcast from Tabriz he once openly thanked the Red Army for overthrowing "the tyrannical regime of Iran." \* On another occasion, speaking to T. C. Young of the American Embassy from Teheran, he freely admitted that the success of his party was due to the support of the Soviet army in Azerbaijan. Asking why

2 An attempt by Colonel William T. Sexton, the American military attaché in Teheran, to see things at first hand was unsuccessful because the armed Democrats put him and those who accompanied him under arrest, and released them only with the understanding that they would return straightway to Teheran.

3 Besides Pishevari: Mohammed Biriya, educated in Russia, Minister of Education; Dr. Salamollah Javid, Minister of Interior, a Communist active in the 1910^1920 agitation for uniting Azerbaijan with Russia, and Governor-General of Azerbaijan after Pishevari's resignation from the premiership; Sadiq Padegan, born in Russia, chairman of the Central Committee of the Democratic party; Adalat, member of the Russian Communist party in Baku, founder of the Democratic party in Azerbaijan; and General Danishyan, Commander-in-Chief of the Democratic army, who spoke broken Turkish, knew no Persian and spoke, read, and wrote fluently only in Russian.

\* *Washington Post*, April 12, 1946.

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